

### *Bill to Simplify Public Documents Receives Unanimous Consent*

**Washington, DC** – Rep. Bruce Braley announced today the US Senate passed the *Plain Writing Act of 2010*

(H.R. 946) late Monday night. The bill requires the federal government to write documents, such as tax returns, federal college aid applications, and Veterans Administration forms in simple easy-to-understand language. Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah) had placed a hold on the bill for months, but recently agreed to lift it after Braley met with him personally.

"The Plain Writing Act requires a simple change to business-as-usual that'll make a big difference for anyone who's ever filled out a tax return or received a government document," said Representative Braley. "This bill shows what bipartisanship can accomplish when we put aside our differences and work together for the common good. Writing government documents in plain language will increase government accountability and will save Americans time and money. Plain, straightforward language makes it easy for taxpayers to understand what the federal government is doing and what services it is offering."

In June, Braley met with Bennett to discuss the bill's merits and try to alleviate any of Bennett's concerns. After making minor changes, Bennett lifted his hold and the bill passed last night by unanimous consent. The amended Senate version will now go back to the House for final passage.

The *Plain Writing Act* requires the federal government to write new publications, forms, and publicly distributed documents in a "clear, concise, well-organized" manner that follows the best practices of plain language writing.

Braley introduced the Plain Language Act in February 2009. The bill passed the House by a widely bipartisan margin of 386-33.

### **Examples of Plain Language in Use: Before and After**

Here are three before-and-after examples of how plain language was applied to federal documents to make them easier to understand. For more examples, see <http://www.plainlanguage.gov>

**Example #1:** Medicare Fraud Letter (click link)

[http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before\\_after/medicarefraudltr.cfm](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before_after/medicarefraudltr.cfm)

**Example #2:** FDA drug warning label (click link)

[http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before\\_after/overctrdrug.pdf](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before_after/overctrdrug.pdf)

**Example #3:** IRS form (click links)

Before: [http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before\\_after/CP2000\\_before.pdf](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before_after/CP2000_before.pdf)

After: [http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before\\_after/CP2000\\_after.pdf](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before_after/CP2000_after.pdf)